

How are Speed Limits determined?

The speed limit on an existing roadway is established by the 85th percentile speed. To determine the 85th percentile speed, a speed study is conducted along the roadway. The two techniques employed by the City of College Station to collect vehicle speeds are placing tubes connected to a data-recording device across the roadway or by using a radar gun.

85th percentile speed – the speed that the stated percentile of vehicles travel at or below. For example, if the 85th percentile speed is 30 mph then 85 percent of the vehicle speeds were equal to or below 30 mph. This speed is used by engineers as a measure of the maximum reasonable speed for a roadway, since most drivers tend to limit their travel speed to one that is reasonable and safe relative to the conditions of the roadway; these conditions include other vehicles, roadway characteristics and weather conditions.

